

PHIL ENGLISH
3RD DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

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CONGRESSIONAL REAL ESTATE CAUCUS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3803

November 6, 2003

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U.S.-E.U Ties
Help Close the Gap and Strengthen Our Allies

Dear Colleague,


As the United States continues to wage the War on Terrorism, expand world trade and strengthen international economic relationships, we as members of Congress must unite and tackle the global challenges facing us today. In this critical time, confronted with a divergence of opinions over Iraq and foreign policy, we must reach out to our allies and close the cultural divide which separates the countries on either side of the Atlantic.

As a proud Atlanticist, and member of Transatlantic Policy Network, I reached out to European Parliament member, Bill Newton Dunn, and invited him to visit Pennsylvania's 3rd district. During his stay, Bill attended a local lunch with major economic leaders, joined me in hosting an open forum at a local college and participated in one of the largest community parades in my district.

Enclosed is an article from *The Erie-Times News*, which highlighted the recent town meeting. The forum, which attracted about 80 people, a majority of students, focused on U.S.-E.U. issues. Our discussions not only deepened the understanding of our cultural divides but opened new door ways for transatlantic cooperation. Next year, I plan to join Mr. Dunn in a similar meeting in the U.K. and continue to work to strengthen our partnership.

Taking the initiative to improve America's relations through transatlantic dialogue will strengthen our partnerships and help bring us to a new parliamentary level. I encourage all of you to undertake similar exchange programs and help draw attention to and understanding of the historical transatlantic relationship. This is just a simple stepping stone that we, as members of Congress, can take to help promote peace, stability and democracy.

Sincerely,


Phil English
Member of Congress

Article published Oct 26, 2003

U.S., E.U. lawmakers bridge culture gap

By Tim Hahn

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There are divisions driven between the countries on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, ranging from the food people eat and the subsidies farmers get to the wars countries wage and the costs of cleaning up after them.

But those divisions aren't so vast that they can't be bridged through discussion, U.S. Rep. Phil English and European Parliament Member Bill Newton Dunn told an audience at Gannon University on Saturday.

English, R-3rd Dist., and Dunn, who represents the East Midlands section of the United Kingdom, talked about the differences between the United States and the European Union during a town hall meeting in the Yehl Alumni Room at the Waldron Campus Center at Gannon University.

Both agreed that, while these differences exist, the United States and the collection of European nations in the European Union share common values that make it possible to talk about and try and resolve the problems.

"If we don't talk about and try to resolve them, we'll drift farther apart," Dunn said.

English characterized some of the disagreements as "misunderstandings" and said he believes they can be cleared up by "making our viewpoints more clear."

He called Saturday's town hall meeting, which drew about 50 people, the first-ever open discussion with audience participation put on by representatives of the U.S. and E.U. governments. English and Dunn will discuss the issues next year when English visits with Dunn's constituents.

Among the differences highlighted during Saturday's program included the desire by the European Union, which will add 10 new members to its 15-nation group in May 2004, to establish a military force. English said there are concerns in the U.S. about how that might weaken NATO. Dunn said the European Union is not intent on being a military superpower but would like to carry a greater burden militarily when conflicts arise so they are not so dependant on American military.

Another issue discussed during the meeting was the possibility of Turkey being admitted into the European Union. English said the country has the opportunity to be the "shining example" for the Middle East and central Europe if it doesn't get into the European Union.

Dunn said he personally supports accepting Turkey into the political federation. But there are concerns among his other E.U. members about the potential of Turkey quickly becoming the European Union's largest state based on its population.

Other differences between European and American leaders that Dunn addressed in his remarks included the Iraq war, the detainment of al-Qaida and Taliban prisoners at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba and genetically modified plants.

Dunn also addressed the issue of tariffs placed on imported steel. European leaders have opposed the duties on the grounds that they hurt their industry, and the European Union has threatened to impose retaliatory duties on U.S. exports.

English has been a vocal supporter of the steel tariffs and stressed Saturday that he is firmly behind the U.S. position.

Americans need to engage their European counterparts for common goals, and doing so provides the country a great opportunity to strengthen itself, English told the audience.

"At the same time, we can build on our friendship. The way to begin that is to listen," he said.